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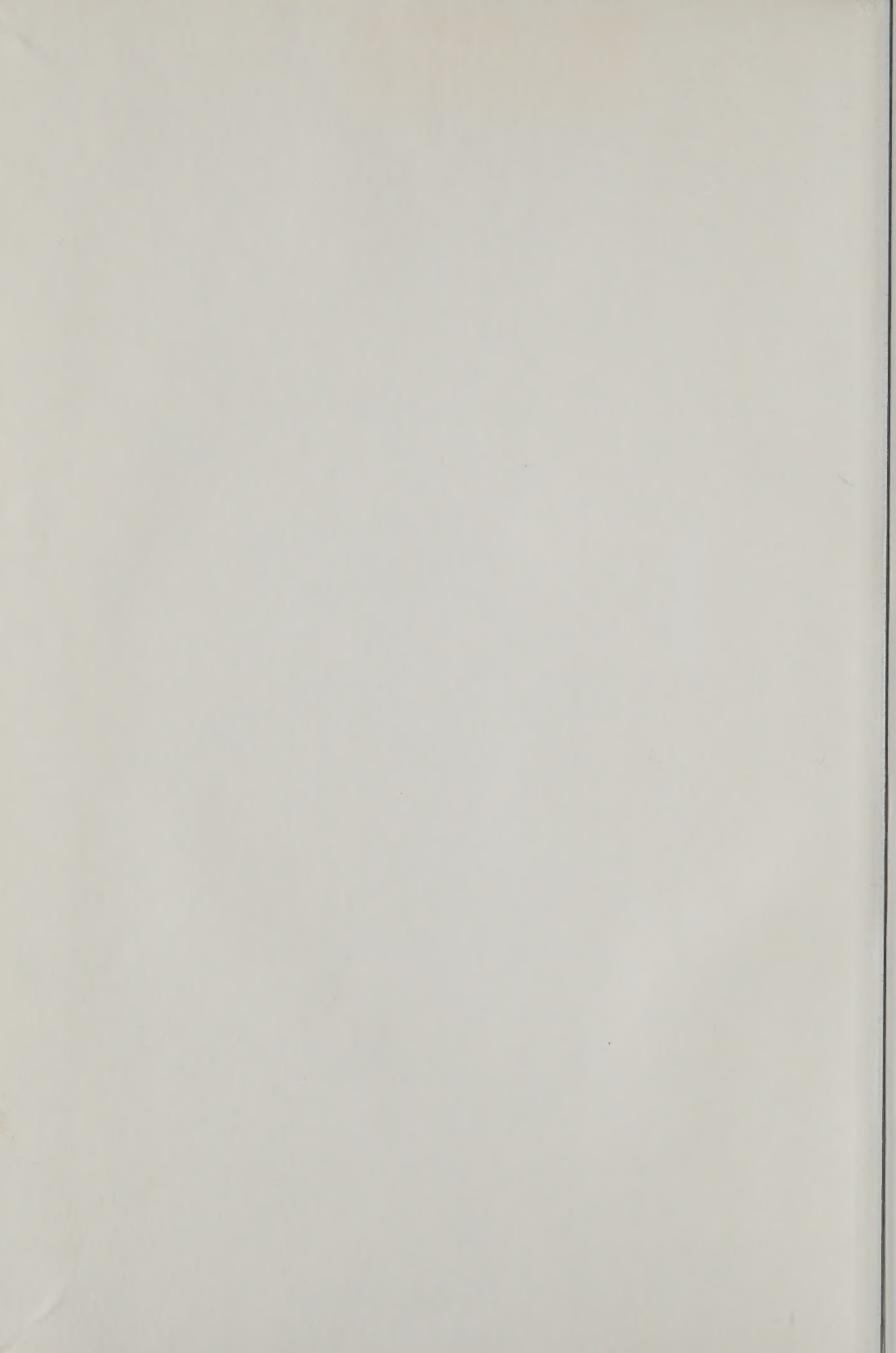
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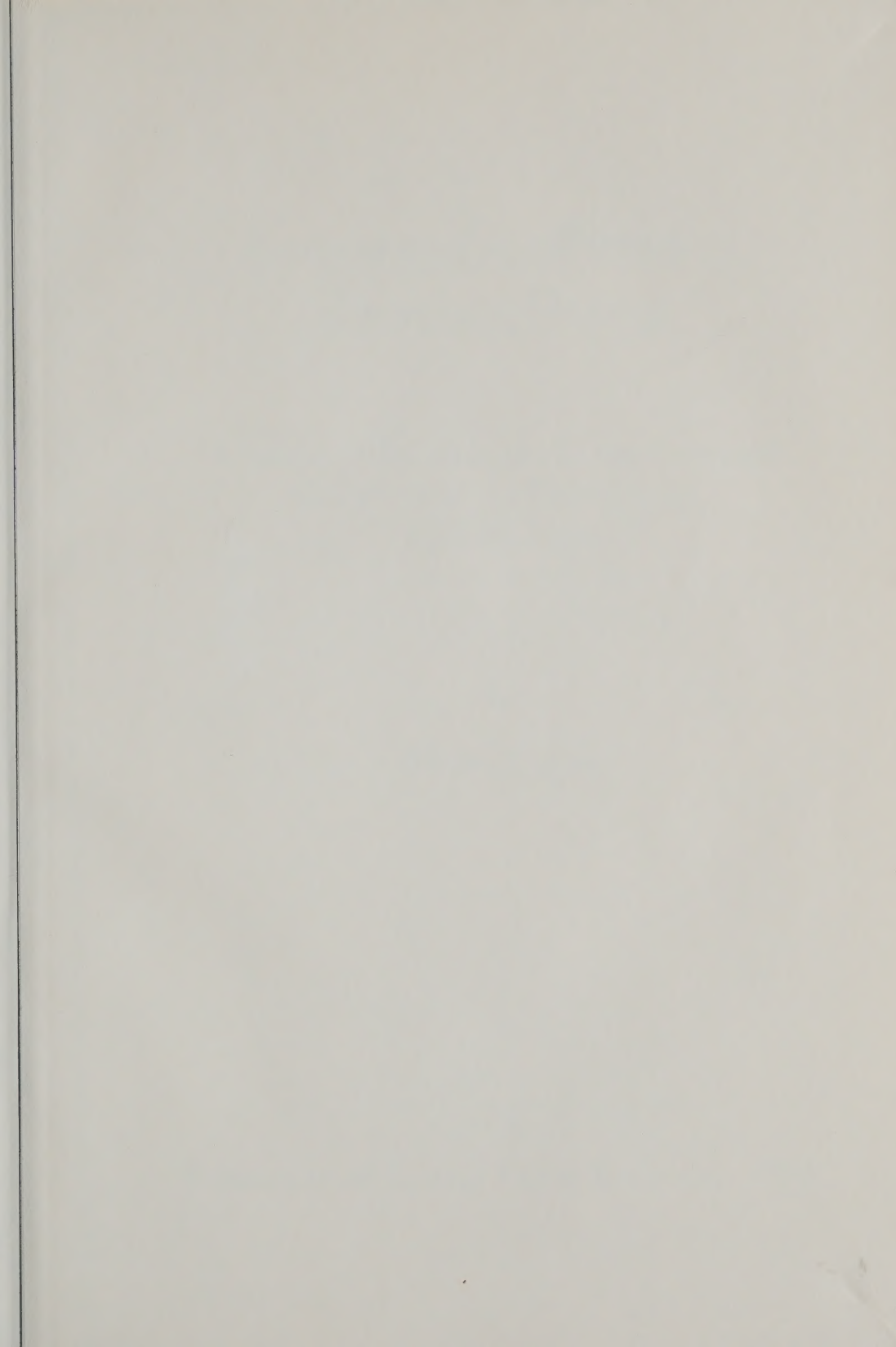
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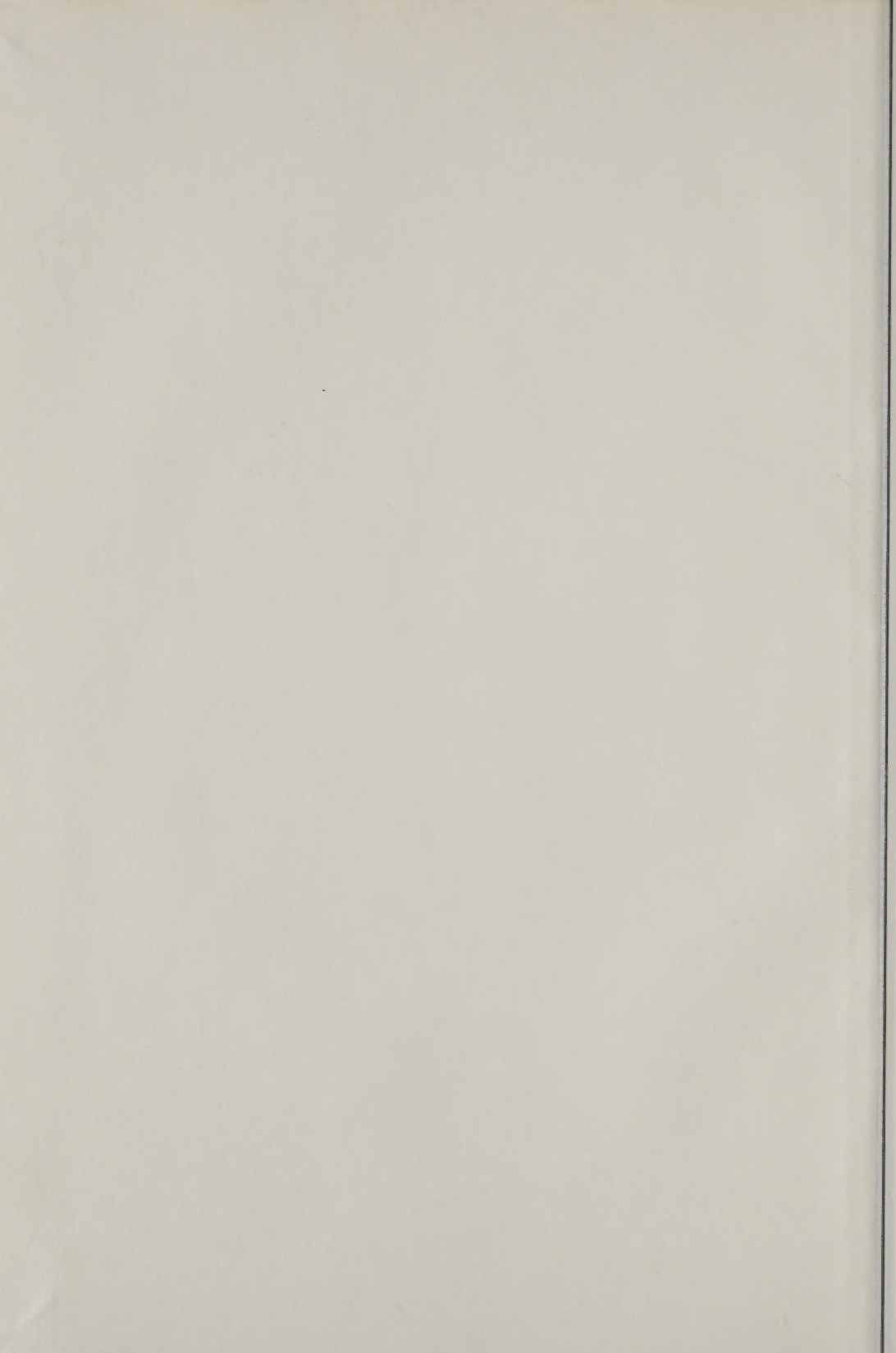
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*Kansas and the Stream of
American Destiny*

A Lecture Delivered at the Kansas Centennial
Conference at the University on
April 30, 1954

by

Allan Nevins

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS PRESS
LAWRENCE, KANSAS
University of Kansas Press, Lawrence, 1954

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PATRIOTISM, Herbert Spencer once wrote, with that dislike of nationalism and chauvinism which always marked his thought, is reflex egoism or extended selfishness. As Kansans met to celebrate their centenary, they would have done well to bear in mind that aphorism. It will be profitable, I think, to examine the relations between the hundred-year career of Kansas and the parallel career of the whole republic with special reference to one subject: the contributions of the State to the traditions of American liberalism. But it would be fatuous to do this with a view to flattering the pride of Kansas or indeed of the United States.

In cold fact, liberalism in its classic sense—the maintenance of individual freedom: freedom of thought, of speech, of conscience, of economic and social action within legitimate bounds—has sometimes fared ill within Kansas. It has often been caught in cruel predicaments in the nation as a whole, and in recent times has suffered injury from some terrible and unescapable dilemmas faced by the American people. One dilemma is that of protecting our ancient freedoms while pursuing the inexorable path of consolidation and centralization fixed by economic and social circumstance. All Western nations, however much they cherished individual privileges, have found that the rise of great industrial aggregations to serve thickening populations has required a counterbalancing centralization of political power. This double-headed collectivism naturally places sharp restrictions on individual freedom. From Charles H. Van Hise in *Concentration and Control* to John Dewey in *Liberalism and Social Action*, so-called liberals have defended the growing authority of the state, but the process must nevertheless provoke doubts and regrets. A more

recent dilemma is offered by the militarization (a grim but accurate word) of the American people. Caught in what President Eisenhower calls "the age of danger," we must arm heavily for survival; and this discipline means a constant threat of regimentation. We cannot afford to be complacent about the past, present, or future of liberalism either in Kansas or in America.

That Kansas has had a special character and peculiar destiny most of her citizens have always believed. Just what have that character and destiny been, and what have they meant to American liberalism?

One fact is obvious at the outset: that in their respective careers during the past century Kansas and the United States have followed highly divergent roads. The United States has moved steadily along the broad highway of industrialization and urbanization; Kansas has of necessity clung to the narrower lane of agricultural growth. The nation as a whole, stage by stage, has reached a point where 12 or 15 per cent of its population, equipped with modern engineering devices, can produce food for all. This healthful process has released the other 85 per cent for a vast multiplicity of undertakings. It is mainly because of invention and industrialization, which give every American an average of sixty slaves—that is, machine power equivalent to sixty workers toiling day and night—that our standard of living has risen (materially) so high. Our position contrasts sharply with that of India, where 95 per cent of the population strive to produce enough food for the country, and never quite succeed.

As America has become industrialized and urbanized, Kansas has of course taken certain steps in the same direction; her capital investments in industry during the

The first of these is the fact that the
theology of the church is not a static
entity, but a living and growing
entity, which is constantly being
renewed and reformed.

The second is the fact that the
theology of the church is not a
monopoly of the clergy, but a
shared responsibility of the whole
church.

The third is the fact that the
theology of the church is not a
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lived out in the life of the church.

The fourth is the fact that the
theology of the church is not a
subject, but a way of life, which
is lived out in the life of the church.

The fifth is the fact that the
theology of the church is not a
doctrine, but a faith, which is
lived out in the life of the church.

The sixth is the fact that the
theology of the church is not a
system, but a mystery, which is
lived out in the life of the church.

The seventh is the fact that the
theology of the church is not a
method, but a love, which is
lived out in the life of the church.

course of World War II were impressive. Essentially, however, she is still a farming State. Thus we have the fundamental circumstance that national destiny and State destiny have in large degree lain crosswise.

Out of this divergence early came a bitter conflict between the agrarian and the industrial or financial interests, with much name-calling that we can today grant was exaggerated on both sides. The *New York Nation* in May, 1896, said tartly: "Kansas now cuts the worst figure of any State in the Union." What Kansas orators were saying at that time of Wall Street, Big Business, and Mark Hanna was almost unprintable. Out of the divergence and conflict came suffering. The physical scars of the hard years of the Farmers' Alliance and Populist era were matched by psychological scars; for Western farmers felt that while the leaders of the industrial revolution and business concentration were astride a great lurching harrow, and *they* were the toads beneath, the American majority callously jeered or reproached the sufferers. "The toad beneath the harrow knows, exactly where each toothpoint goes"—that was bad enough; "the butterfly upon the road, preaches contentment to that toad"—this was worse.

The conflict, the suffering, and the mutual misunderstanding gave birth to explosive forces in politics and government. They were the more explosive because Kansas, in her most discontented period, had a relatively simple class structure. The State was too young, too homogeneous, and too poor to have produced any groups like the oligarchic planter families which played such a part in Virginia's history, or the important merchant elements so prominent in the record of Massachusetts. The forces were also the more explosive because the society of

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Kansas lacked maturity. Critics of the State constantly reproached it for drabness, aridity, provincialism, and lack of distinction—and the criticism had much force. A more mature society might have endured hardships and injustice with greater philosophy, as Vermonters endure it, or with some such sense of purification by tragedy as South Carolinians had after Reconstruction. But the explosive violence with which Kansas asserted herself as Agrarian Rebel did much to shape and harden the Kansas character, already well individualized.

This great central cable in Kansas history—the stubborn agrarianism of its 80,000 square miles during a century of national industrialization—is the strand on which a thousand events and personal stories can be strung. It gives meaning to the careers of the most prominent leaders of Kansas. Of recent years the force of the Kansas divergence has been lessened. For one reason, modern invention has largely erased the old difference between city and country in America; the automobile, hard roads, telephone, radio, and television make urban and rural life much alike. For another reason, with its government crop supports the farm population has come to share in that Special Privilege it once denounced. Nevertheless, the special character of Kansas, a wheat sheaf and not a sunflower her true emblem, remains.

Both the record and the character must not be oversimplified. Kansas had of course witnessed a great deal of history before the industrial revolution got under full steam in the East after the Civil War. Certain elements in the personality of the State had become fixed by 1870. A long line of writers, from Eli Thayer through John J. Ingalls to André Siegfried, have declared that Kansas is the unique Western child of Puritanism. It is that in a

special sense. As everyone should know, the original population of Kansas came chiefly not from New England, or from Missouri and the South, but from the middle tier of States stretching from New York and New Jersey westward to Iowa and Illinois. But much as we must disagree with Ingalls in many of his generalizations upon his native State, we can accept his statement that Kansas was largely dominated by the New England mind. Governor Charles Robinson, for example, the son of Hardwick, Massachusetts, was a typical Puritan in his abolitionist ideas, his fervent belief in free governmental institutions, his moralistic attitude, his historical instinct, and that strong interest in education which did so much for the common schools and the State University of Kansas. He represented a powerful element among the real makers of the commonwealth. If André Siegfried meant that Kansas was peopled by a Puritan stock, he was wrong; but if he meant that it had a vital Puritan leaven—and of all leavens only the Scottish and Jewish leavens have possessed equal strength—he was completely right.

The Kansas struggle of the 'fifties strengthened this Puritanism. It inspired nearly all of the Northern poets—Longfellow, Lowell, Emerson, Holmes, Bryant, and above all, Whittier, who returned to the subject again and again. Overseas it was watched with anxiety by some of the finest European spirits. Byron's widow collected money for the New England ideal of freedom in Kansas, Victor Hugo wrote a pamphlet, and Walter Savage Landor penned verses. Like all such struggles, it was grotesquely misrepresented by many participants, North and South. The image and the reality of the Kansas war, so ably disentangled by James C. Malin, are very different. As historians have separated truth from propaganda,

many idols of the antislavery enthusiasts have been overturned.

Yet the fundamental fact remains that on the Kansas plains from 1854 to 1860 was fought a momentous conflict between the idea of freedom and the idea of slavery; that a desperate effort was made by an unprincipled group to present Kansas, in defiance of climate, soil, and population, at least briefly and superficially as the sixteenth slave State; and that the great cause of human advancement won when the Topeka Constitution triumphed over the Lecompton Constitution. Stephen A. Douglas always believed that the Lecompton battle was a salient national turning-point; that if Buchanan had joined him in rejecting that proslavery instrument, the bluster of Southern fire-eaters would have been put to the test before they had fully matured their plot; and that their discomfiture in 1858 would have averted civil war in 1861. However this may be, the moral elements bound up in the struggle along the Kaw and the Missouri strengthened the vein of Puritanism in the Kansas character, just as the violence of the contest nurtured traits of bellicosity and extremism.

A belligerent trait was made plainly evident in the Civil War record of the State. Kansas sent more soldiers to battle than it had voters when the conflict began. It lost more men in proportion to population than any sister State; 61 dead for each 1,000 enlisted. Kansas men fought on practically every field in the Southwest from Wilson's Creek to the Gulf. Provost-Marshal Fry at the end described their proud record. "The same singularly martial discipline," he wrote, "which induced about one-half of the able-bodied men of the State to enter the army without bounty, may be supposed to have increased their

exposure to the casualties of battle after they were in the service." In short, Kansans were born fighters. Along that rough plains frontier, they had to be. The affrays of John Brown and Black Jack Pete, even the campaigns of the Civil War, were transient affairs; but droughts, blizzards, chinch-bugs, Hessian flies, grasshoppers, and tornadoes were abiding enemies. Beginning with the near-famine of 1860, Kansas was always being beset by disaster, and always combating it tooth and nail.

It would be idle to pretend that the civil conflict which lasted from 1854 to 1865, and the harsh struggle with nature which left it doubtful at times whether man could really subdue his environment, did not in many respects lower the level of civilization. If these battles, and this preoccupation with material trials, toughened and refined some men, they corrupted others. The reminiscences of a sheriff of Sumner County illustrate the grueling ordeal that the Kansas frontier offered.

"I guess," he is quoted as saying, "that the year 1874 was about the worst year that Sumner County ever experienced. First, there was the drought that almost cooked everything, and then came the grasshoppers and cleaned up what little was left. On top of all this trouble came the news that the Indians were about to go on the war path. There was some [Indian] killing, too. Pat Hennessy and some other white men were killed that summer down on the old Chisholm Trail where the town of Hennessy is located." He adds that the horse-thieves were worse than the Indians, and describes a gruesome murder by a gambler and all-round ruffian, who was promptly lynched. T. A. McNeal informs us that Newton was once called the wickedest town in Kansas. But this, he remarks, was a bold statement; "for Kansas in the past

has had some towns that in a competitive examination for wickedness would have given Hell a neck-and-neck race." On many men, and on whole societies, the frontier laid a corrupting stamp.

One of the resounding episodes of the political history of the 'seventies was the downfall of Samuel C. Pomeroy—"Seed-Corn Pomeroy"—as he fought for reelection to the national Senate; an event notable partly for the fact that it brought John J. Ingalls, the fiercest master of vitriol since John Randolph of Roanoke, into national affairs, and partly because it illuminated the corruptions that had sprung from early Kansas history. Pomeroy's ruin was accomplished by a courageous rural legislator named York, who laid before the two houses, sitting jointly for the election, \$7,000 in bills which Pomeroy had offered him for his vote. The episode shook all Kansas, for Pomeroy had been a powerful man ever since his arrival in the fall of 1854. But what most strikes the present-day student, if he looks up York's speech, is its sweeping indictment of Kansas politics. He speaks of the prevalent corruption, "the deep and damning rascality which has eaten like a plague spot into the fair name of this glorious young State"; and he laments the odium that "has made the name of Kansas and Kansas politics a hissing and a byword throughout the land."

That in the years of Jay Gould, the Credit Mobilier, and the Tweed Ring the name of rural Kansas, Puritan Kansas, could be a hissing all over America, was evidence that the frontier influence had its debits as well as its credits.

But it was not the antislavery contest, nor the Civil War, nor the frontier, which did most to give Kansas its special place in American history and its influence on our liberal tradition. It was, as we have said, the agrarian

struggle of the 'seventies, 'eighties, and 'nineties. This etched still deeper the peculiar characteristics of Puritanism, individualism, and belligerency; it confirmed the preoccupation of Kansas with material affairs; and it accentuated the underlying tendencies toward radicalism, a root-and-branch approach to human problems. Kansans had always tended, like their climate, to go to extremes. Now they became more intense than any other equally numerous body of Americans.

Revolutions are not made by utterly impoverished and oppressed societies, by peoples crushed and leaderless; they are made by communities where we find new growth, new needs, new possibilities, and new hopes—frustrated by heavy obstacles. The State was trying all too hard to grow too fast. It had consistently lived on borrowed money, owing the plutocratic East. All the farms, the towns, the counties, had borrowed money. When world prices of crops fell and world prices of gold rose, when credit became as tight a vise as the iron maiden of Nuremberg, the Kansas hope paled. Ominous rumbles heralded a storm rising beyond the flat horizon. At first the distant peals were regarded humorously. More antics by crazy farmers, said the critics, more speeches by wild fanatics, more moonshine platforms which would end in a few more coöperative grain elevators! Then shrewd men suddenly perceived that a true revolution was getting under way. Thomas Benton Murdock interpreted the signs correctly.

"By Godfrey's diamonds, something's happening, young feller," he told a disciple. "Those damn farmers are preparing to tear down the courthouse!"

Caution was thrown aside as in the days of Freesoilers against Border Ruffians. "For a generation," wrote Ing-

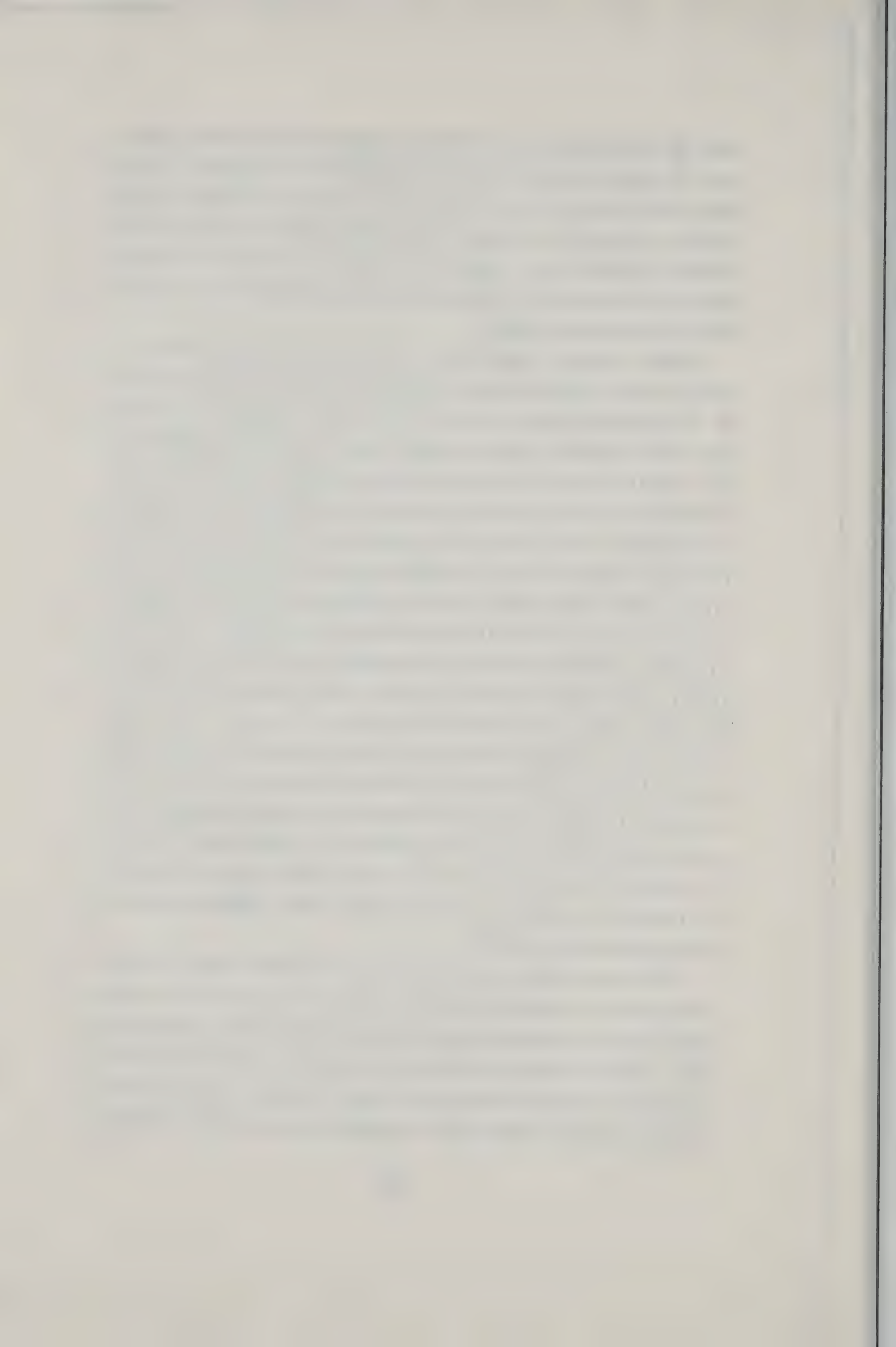
alls, while the storm was still rising, "Kansas has been the testing ground for every experiment in morals, politics, and social life. Doubt of all existing institutions has been respectable. Nothing has been venerated or revered merely because it exists or has endured. Prohibition, female suffrage, fiat money, free silver, every incoherent and fantastic dream of social improvement and reform, every economic delusion that has bewildered the foggy brain of fanatics, every political fallacy nurtured by misfortune, poverty, and failure, rejected elsewhere, has here found tolerance and advocacy. The enthusiasm of youth, the conservatism of age, have alike yielded to the contagion, making the history of the State a melodramatic series of cataclysms, in which tragedy and comedy have contended for the mastery, and the convulsions of Nature have been emulated by the catastrophes of society. There has been neither peace, tranquillity, nor repose." Such language shows how extremism on one side bred extremism on the other. If the reformers grew passionate, so did the conservatives.

Why did this agrarian revolt, with so much heartfelt conviction behind it, accomplish so little in permanently strengthening the American liberal tradition? For that in the long stretch of American history it did accomplish little there can be no doubt. While it achieved something, we must question whether it took the right path or aimed at the best goals. For two decades the influence of Kansas in the American system was a jutting force: the influence of a homogeneous, old-stock, country-minded people, close to soil, skies, and growing crops, with time to think deliberately and hard, and with the same readiness to debate first principles which the old-stock Eastern yeomen had shown in Revolutionary days. The popula-

tion in the panic year 1893 was nine-tenths native born, and the rest mainly British and North European. It was overwhelmingly rural. Under the hammer blows of adversity, it was fiercely agrarian in the sense in which John Adams would have used the word. It wanted to break patterns, not solidify them. But did it clearly see what it could best accomplish?

What Kansas Populism did do was to help throw a bridge from Jeffersonian liberalism to the Progressivism of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. In early days the Western pioneers had believed in the Jeffersonian tenets of rural honesty, independence, and thrift, the restriction of industrialism to a fair balance, and the encouragement of freehold expansion; from government they had desired little but light spending, low taxes, and cheap land. Now they began calling for Federal regulation of trusts, Federal ownership of railroads and telegraphs, a Federal farm credit system, and Federal disaster relief; they looked not to Topeka but Washington. Their program they still called liberalism, but the word had taken on a changed meaning. It is doubtful if they fully realized the implications of their demands. They were anxious to hurry on governmental centralization, but were they willing to give up their old individual liberties in the process? Just how far would this aggrandizement of national authority carry them from Jeffersonian or even Jacksonian ideals?

For some light on the question whether they took the true path we might briefly compare the course of three great farming populations in three parts of the globe who were simultaneously shaken by hardship into fiercely determined action: Denmark, New Zealand, and Kansas. Of these three, Denmark is smaller in area than Kansas,



New Zealand larger. From 1875 to 1910 all three expressed much the same temper. Denmark, a farmers' state, now possesses, as a result of measures initiated in this period, an economy planned in the interest of agricultural efficiency and social justice. Its systematic abolition of landlordism, tenancy, and rural debt, its equitable taxation, its social insurance schemes, its statutory encouragement of education and other instruments of culture, and its constant use of the central government as an agency of change, have made it in the eyes of many a model commonwealth. It represents an application of the best yeoman intelligence, on the Socialist plane, to the problems of modern life. Many of the changes, coincidental with the conversion of Denmark to dairying, were achieved in the very period of the intensest Kansas ferment.

Meanwhile, New Zealand, under John Ballance and Richard Seddon, was displaying the same temper and using the same ideas in reshaping its socio-economic life. Much more than the Kansas people, the sturdy New Zealanders had been acquainted with the idea of community planning from the start; for New Zealand was colonized by the migration of whole communities at a time. To Christchurch, Dunedin, and other places, settlement first came in a body, with every calling from minister to blacksmith, every enterprise from store to steamfitter, every instrument of culture, represented in the arriving shiploads. American visitors to New Zealand today are astonished at the vigorous social and cultural fruits of this system of settlement by communities migrating in a mass: the flourishing museums, libraries, recreation parks, specialized schools, and even art galleries in towns like Timaru and Nelson. These Antipodeans were ready to use the island government in vigorous

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ways. Their insurance schemes, their control of industry and labor, their equalization of wealth, were even more advanced and rigorous than Denmark's. Like the Danes, the New Zealanders believed wholeheartedly in coöperation, and made coöperative agencies work. Particularly after the overthrow of the Conservatives in 1890, New Zealand rapidly became a half-Socialist, half-coöperative Commonwealth, studied, admired, and denounced around the globe.

It is plain that the Kansas Populists, for all their heroic zeal and energy, did not accomplish what the farmers of New Zealand and Denmark wrought. Of course one reason is evident. It can be said, with much truth, that if Kansas had been an independent island-Commonwealth, or an independent peninsula-nation, then William A. Peffer, Jerry Simpson, Mary Ellen Lease, and their associates might have done for it what Estrup and Deuntzer did for Denmark, and what "King Dick" Seddon did for New Zealand. Instead, Kansas was one of forty States, compelled to adjust herself to Indiana, New York, and California. The New Zealanders, rallying under banners reading "Down with Lombard Street," could shape their own destinies; the Kansas radicals, mustering under the device "Down with Wall Street," had to reconcile themselves to the election of McKinley. "You can't legislate prosperity into existence," said Ingalls, speaking for the East, "any more than you can make rain by legislation." Like the New Zealanders and Danes, the Populists believed that much *could* be done. The whole country believes it today—but in 1890, Kansas had to yield to the national skepticism.

So, at least, defenders of the Populists can assert. William Allen White, ten years after his what's-the-matter-

with-Kansas explosion, recalled with contrition the fact that he had derided the Populist candidate for Chief Justice for saying, in effect, that the rights of the user are paramount over the rights of the owner. Since then the world had moved. "The *Gazette* was wrong in those days," he confessed, "and Judge Doster was right. But he was out too early for the season and his views got frost-bitten. This is a funny world. About all we can do is to move with it."

Defenders of the Populists can also assert that they did more than this—that they helped it move. They could not remake their society like New Zealand's, but they could set free a leaven which helped alter the texture of national thought. Their destiny ran counter to the destiny of the nation; very well, they would deflect the nation. The Kansas agrarians objected to Manchester Liberalism of the Herbert Spencer type as outworn; they wanted at least the John Stuart Mill type. They fought for the larger governmental activity which, expanding under Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, came into full bloom in New Deal days. They believed that agencies in Washington could be used to protect helpless people from calamities not of their own making, to lessen wrongs and iron down inequalities, and to put science and collective effort in harness for the general betterment. Government might even be used to redistribute some of the wealth and keep it more evenly spread. Everybody believes that nowadays except a few Texas oil men and their like.

The question remains, however, whether Kansans of that era made their proper contributions to the American liberal tradition. One defect of their movement was its glaring lack of a true intellectual basis. Ingalls' phrase

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about "foggy brains" is unjust; the Kansas leaders, within their limitations, had thought slowly, clearly, and courageously. But the limitations were grievous, for they were relatively uneducated, unread, untravelled, and largely unaware of historic facts or current world trends. Their movement was too much a horny-handed blow at intolerable hardships, too little a hardheaded probing of their social and economic predicament. They contributed a good deal to the spirit of the coming Progressive era, but not much to its stock of ideas. None of their polemics (for they seldom went beyond polemics) is read today; they had no Tom Paine, no Hinton Rowan Helper. Doubtless the embattled Kansas leaders were later respected by the intellectuals so prominent under the Square Deal and the New Freedom—by Jane Addams and Brand Whitlock, Lincoln Steffens and Herbert Croly, Louis Brandeis and Walter Hines Page. But were they much admired? And if not, why?

We may also question whether the agrarian rebels, in trying to throw their bridge from Jeffersonian democracy to Rooseveltian and Wilsonian Progressivism, did not do unwitting damage to some liberal values. Was it in the proper spirit of Kansas to contend so decisively for centralization? It would have been better had they tried to rear Utopia by their own hands on their own 80,000 square miles. The coöperative principle which was invoked so effectively in New Zealand and Denmark could have been made to yield nourishing fruits in our own West. Unquestionably, the obstacles were formidable: the poverty of the farmers in this era, their bondage to Eastern capitalists, the steady blows of rainless years, the fact that wheat-growing is less amenable to coöperative action than dairying, and the before-mentioned position

of Kansas as one of a large family of closely connected States. Nevertheless, more could have been done than was attempted. More, too, could have been done to effect self-help through Topeka as an alternative to Federal help through Washington.

Kansas in the days of the stalwart Simpson and Peffer was an inspiring rebel, but it is not so inspiring to the liberal mind as Wisconsin in the days of Robert M. La Follette. La Follette, equally stalwart, was a well-educated thinker. He had an ideal of Wisconsin as a largely self-sufficient commonwealth, where individual liberty would bloom; and the Wisconsin Plan was an effort to use State experts to create State wealth and a true State culture. A series of important laws enacted at Madison made that capital a cynosure of all American eyes. Not Albany, not Springfield, not Topeka, ever equalled it. Under La Follette, the people of Wisconsin were solving some of their problems by their own means. Meanwhile, coöperation flourished—credit unions, land mortgage associations, coöperative creameries, cheese-factories, and elevators. Was it impossible for the Kansas leaders of the 'eighties and 'nineties to have adopted some of these measures? Such policies would have had the virtue of contributing, not to a centralization of governmental power, but to the basic doctrine of agrarian liberalism, the freedom of the individual.

Perhaps the fundamental lack of Kansas in that period, and later, was really the quality of maturity. It had the virtues and still more the defects of youth. Its most distinguished sons always thought of it as young, with the impulsiveness and changeability of early adolescence. They shared with it these qualities.

William Allen White, for example, outwardly all bland cherubic placidity, drew from the air of Kansas, like his friends Fred Funston and Vernon L. Parrington, something that made him reckless. At the end of his career he recalled that for sixty years he had needlessly jumped out of balloons and twenty-story windows, and marched through fiery furnaces. Why? He could not tell. He always enjoyed repeating a friend's description of his infantile physiognomy. "Look at that face," said the friend, "pink and white, fat and sweet, as featureless and innocent as a baby's bottom!" But, added the friend, don't let that face fool you. In 1896 White's broadside on the matter with Kansas delighted Hanna and all stand-patters. And where did he stand just twenty years later? At the opposite extreme. He was making up his mind that wartime price-fixing should be permanent; that the government should unite the railroads into one big system, Federally operated; that labor should be "Federalized" under compulsory arbitration; that income taxes should run as high as 90 per cent, while death taxes should take all estates over ten millions; and that compulsory military training should transfer every Maine boy to South Carolina, and every California boy to Ohio. Such ideas were less an expression of Socialist views than of the adolescent and changeable spirit of Kansas.

But White was nevertheless an unwearied fighter for more maturity in Kansas; more love for the State, more belief in its self-contained possibilities. He knew that her basic Puritanism, bellicosity, and extremism, were naturally antipathetic to certain finer qualities of life; and only with those qualities could come the adult responsibility and the faith in the power of Kansas to help herself that were lacking in Sockless Jerry Simpson's time.

The first part of the book is devoted to a general
introduction to the subject of the history of
the world. It is a very interesting and
instructive work, and it is well
worth a read. The author has done
a very good job of presenting the
facts of history in a clear and
concise manner. The book is
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book for anyone who is
interested in the history of
the world.

What Kansas most lacks, White used to say, was a sense for beauty. He once told me that few scenes were so entrancing as the rolling miles of ripe Kansas wheat as the grain turns from pale gold to reddish copper; but, he lamented, what Kansas painter had ever caught that beauty on his canvas? "Nothing is more gorgeous in color and form than a Kansas sunset," he writes, "yet it is hidden from us."

The wind in the cottonwoods, the song of the meadow lark and brown thrush, found no echo in the strains of Kansas composers. It was not a Kansan but the Missourian John G. Neihardt who sang of Hugh Glass and the Indian wars on the Kansas plains. Ed Howe, of Atchison, in *The Story of a Country Town*, had given readers a glimpse of the fact that the human spirit could be as tortured in a Western environment, that life could be as harsh, angular, and frustrated, and that a powerful drama could develop as logically from the clash of warped characters, as in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* or Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*. Howe's memorable book was published as early as 1883. But neither Howe nor Dorothy Canfield, neither William Allen White nor Paul Wellman, ever widened the vision. That was left for Willa Cather of Nebraska. No writer of fiction has lifted Kansas material to a high creative plane. Until lately, history also had failed to mirror the past in adequate literary terms. All in all, Kansas life of today is as yet deprived of the enrichment by sculpture and music, painting and poesy, which might perpetuate nobilities of the past and nourish dreams of the future.

Until Kansans have a proper sense of what White meant by beauty, their patriotism cannot reach the high-

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present. The author then goes on to discuss the various factors that have shaped the development of the United States, including the role of the government, the influence of the economy, and the impact of the culture. The paper concludes by suggesting that a study of the history of the United States is not only a valuable academic exercise, but also a necessary one for anyone who wishes to understand the world in which we live.

The second part of the paper is a detailed analysis of the role of the government in the development of the United States. It begins by discussing the early years of the nation, when the government was a small, weak entity. It then goes on to discuss the growth of the government over the years, and the various ways in which it has shaped the country. The author argues that the government has been a major force in the development of the United States, and that its actions have had a profound impact on the lives of the people. The paper concludes by suggesting that a study of the role of the government is essential for a full understanding of the history of the United States.

The third part of the paper is a detailed analysis of the influence of the economy on the development of the United States. It begins by discussing the early years of the nation, when the economy was a small, weak entity. It then goes on to discuss the growth of the economy over the years, and the various ways in which it has shaped the country. The author argues that the economy has been a major force in the development of the United States, and that its actions have had a profound impact on the lives of the people. The paper concludes by suggesting that a study of the influence of the economy is essential for a full understanding of the history of the United States.

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est level, nor their liberalism—a faith in individual values—be wholly fortified.

The word “patriotism” in a huge federal republic of 3,000,000 square miles possesses a dual significance. Americans must sometimes think it hard that they have so wide a country to feel patriotic about. Though we do not have to make the choice that Robert E. Lee, torn between America and Virginia, faced in 1861, we sometimes envy the Englishman, with so small a country that he can be affectionately intimate with most of its nooks. Happier still is the Dane, Greek, or Israeli; devotion to 10,000 square miles is naturally more intense than devotion to an area 300 times as large. But the fact is that citizens of our 48 States can feel two kinds of patriotism. Our national patriotism is fundamentally political, based on civil allegiance and the national idea. Our State and local patriotism is fundamentally geographical and sentimental. With the first we associate the idea of power, with the second the idea of place and home. So-called patriotism on any scale can be a poor emotion so long as its main elements are clannishness, acquisitiveness, and pugnacity—the patriotism of the Nazi or the American hundred-percenter. It needs, as Dean Inge wrote, to be spiritualized and moralized. It must be hallowed by history, legend, poetry, and art. To this spiritualization State and local patriotism, fed by love of home, specially lends itself.

Before its people love Kansas with the right fervor, they will have to make its soil sacred to the nine Muses. Carl Becker relates that as he once sat in a train traversing the plains, he listened to some college girls chattering near by. One maiden, glancing out of the window at the landscape, delighted him by ejaculating, “Good old Kan-

sas!" With all respect to Mr. Becker, it is difficult to feel much impressed by this sort of emotional tribute. If the girl had caught her breath, exclaiming, "There Stephen Kearny's army set out for the invasion of Mexico"—if she had quoted a line from a Kansas poet or orator—if she had referred to the tragic John Westlock of *The Story of a Country Town*—a subtler feeling would have been involved.

When Robert Louis Stevenson wandered along the coast of Fifeshire, he did not stare around him vacantly and exclaim: "Good old Scotland!" He mused to better purpose. This county of Fife, he recalled, had been transformed by history, legend, and poetry. Over these commonplace-looking fishing villages brooded the storied past, full of the quaint, the tragic, and the uplifting:

Dunfermline, in whose royal towers the king may be still observed (in the ballad) drinking the blood-red wine; somnolent Inverkeithing, once the quarantine of Leith . . . ; Burntisland, where, when Paul Jones was off the coast, the Reverend Mr. Shirra had a table carried between the tidemarks, and publicly prayed against the rover at the pitch of his voice and his broad lowland dialect; . . . Kirkcaldy, where witches once prevailed extremely, and sank tall ships and honest mariners in the North Sea; . . . Wemyss with its bat-haunted caves, where the Chevalier Johnstone, on his flight from Culloden, passed a night of superstitious terror; . . . Largo Law, and the smoke of Largo Town mounting about its feet, the town of Alexander Selkirk, better known under the name of Robinson Crusoe.

When the nine muses have a richly decorated home on the Kansas prairies, then the State will be able to boast the warmer kind of patriotism that Scott, Burns, and Raeburn gave their little land; then social and intellectual maturity will stamp more of its life; and then

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the fountainhead of liberalism, a belief in the individual, his gifts, potentialities, and sacred rights, will flow more freely.

That the brighter, broader era will come we need have no doubt. The history of Kansas reveals so many cardinal virtues that we may be sure others will be added to them. Honesty was one of these virtues. The Kansas mind has been a sincere mind. From the days of Jim Lane to the present, the State has produced her share of what may be called demagogues; but she has never had a demagogic agitator of the worst type. Her agrarian radicals might be confused, as Jerry Simpson sometimes seemed, or dryly tedious, as W. A. Pepper often appeared, but they had an abiding quality of integrity. Kansas leaders might frequently be commonplace or naïve, but they did not consciously lie, or bring false accusations against the helpless, or appeal to the worst prejudices of their hearers—as one great demagogue in American life today has done. Humor, too, has been a Kansas trait. The State needed it to make its harder years endurable, and blunt its extremist tendencies. One of Jerry Simpson's happiest feats in Congress was to stride down the aisle, pick up the silk hat worn by Dingley of Maine, high priest of protection for the home market, and with a gleeful taunt exhibit its London trade-mark. Lesser men used humor with frontier ebullience. Once when worse calamities than usual had ravaged western Kansas, her representatives proposed some relief spending financed by a bond issue. Conservatives from eastern Kansas protested. The Constitution did not permit this, they argued. A Westerner at once rose to propose a motion. "Resolved," he vociferated, "that 100,000 copies of the Constitution be printed in pamphlet form for distribution among the

destitute people of Western Kansas, to enable them to get through the winter and furnish seed wheat for spring planting."

But of all the cardinal virtues, courage has been the most prominent. Among the forty-eight, Kansas, we repeat, has stood out as a fighting State. Her happiest periods have been her fighting years. The freesoil settlers, the men of the Civil War, and the agrarian reformers never feared the hardest blows. The ideas of Kansans might be bitterly unpopular, from the Topeka Constitution to the Carry Nation ideal of prohibition, and from woman suffrage and State-owned elevators to the Preston B. Plumb plan for national ownership of railways; but their sponsors never faltered in advancing them. They had the backbone to make a boast of the sentence Ingalls used as a reproach: "For a generation Kansas has been a testing-ground for every experiment in morals, politics, and social life."

Even more experiment would have been welcome. Nothing is more important to American progress than variegation among the States. Out of this variegation should naturally flow experimentation in politics, economic arrangements, and social life. State trial of bold innovations is one possible advantage in a Federal nation—too much neglected. It is healthy that Massachusetts should differ in traditions, interests, and ideals from New York, and Kentucky from Michigan. A European might find it hard to distinguish between North and South Carolina; any American knows that oil and water are hardly more diverse. Of all the States, Kansas has been historically one of the most strongly marked. Her stormy history, her steady succession of spectacular figures, her extremist tendencies, give her a unique place in the na-

1952

tional scene. From John Brown to Victor Murdock, she managed to make her neighbor Nebraska look pallidly conventional, and Iowa tamely conservative. When Kansas asserted herself, the whole world knew it. May she continue to do so! For the rest of the nation feels disappointed when she relapses toward those genteel norms so well represented by Mr. Landon. Let us hope that after the soft prairie zephyr has blown mildly awhile, the rousing Kansas cyclone will return.

Nothing less than cyclonic forces, properly harnessed, will now serve the country. We live in times far more perilous than John Brown's or Sockless Jerry Simpson's. Our only security is in a fiercely thrusting progress. Externally, we face a continuing threat of the direst gravity—we are truly in what President Eisenhower calls not a temporary crisis, but "an age of danger." Internally, we shall be lost if we do not make rapid progress in science, industry, culture, and social harmony. Kansas may yet do more than in the past to protect our liberal tradition from the dangers inherent in centralization and in militarization. For the ordeal ahead of us we need the adventurousness and devotion to freedom that marked Kansas history in the angry 'fifties; the toughness and courage bred by the later conflicts between an agrarian State and an industrialized nation; and the idealism and vision which run like a golden thread from Charles Robinson to William Allen White.

EDITORIAL NOTE

The seal of Kansas Territory on the front cover is reproduced by courtesy of the Kansas State Historical Society and of Professor Robert H. Kingman of Washburn University, who made the drawing used for this reproduction. The seal portrays a buffalo and a hunter, the goddess Ceres, and a pioneer, with an ax and a fallen tree at his feet.

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